

MEMORANDUM

Department of Planning, Recreation & Neighborhood Services



To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Through: Thomas J. Wilson, City Manager
From: Bonnie Greiner, Recreation Services Manager
By: Toby S. Librande, Child Care Coordinator
Subject: Contribution to the Santa Clara County School Readiness Assessment Project
Date: 1/15/04

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness, to outline the School Readiness Assessment Project and to request a \$1000.00 contribution to the Assessment Project.

Background

The Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness advances school readiness and success for all children through age eight in the County. This group of regional partners, under the leadership of Success by Six of United Way and the Health Trust, with the support of the Packard Foundation, has been addressing school readiness on a countywide level since November 2001. To date, the Partnership has overseen a mapping project, defined School Readiness (see definition attached), and is currently preparing to conduct a countywide school readiness assessment project. City of Milpitas staff began participating in this partnership by invitation in October 2002, representing a small municipality.

The Partnership has been evaluating the status of school readiness in Santa Clara County over the past two years. One huge barrier to understanding the school readiness climate in our County has arisen, however: the lack of concrete data measuring the school readiness of children entering into kindergarten. The Partnership determined that this data is crucial to understanding and improving school readiness and decided to oversee such a study. Utilizing the San Mateo model, the Santa Clara Assessment will include two objectives: to provide a reliable, reusable benchmark of school readiness, and to build ownership for the data with the coalition of Santa Clara County funders (of which the City of Milpitas is invited to be included).

Applied Survey Research (ASR) has been selected to conduct the assessment for the school year 2004/2005. The project includes ASR working directly with teachers in the County to collect data in the fall of 2004, and analyzing the data based upon five predetermined variables by January 2005. The survey design option "API Over-Sample" will include countywide data, with the ability to sort the data based upon high, medium or low public school Academic Performance Index (API) score. The sample size will include approximately 38 classrooms selected from within Santa Clara County, with schools representing high, medium and low API scores. The data will be able to be sorted by five different (as yet to be established) variables, such as gender and previous preschool experience.

For further details regarding the deliverables for the study, please refer to the attached The Santa Clara County School Readiness Assessment – Draft Work Plan (Kids in Common). By utilizing the “API Over-Sample” approach, the study will provide important data regarding “how ready is ready enough” as well as an opportunity to compare clusters of schools with similar API scores. Since this assessment has never been done before in Santa Clara County, it is groundbreaking work. The data and outcomes will shape the discussion and influence the work countywide around school readiness in Santa Clara County for the foreseeable future.

The Partnership is comprised of representatives from a variety of agencies, foundations, collaborative groups and two cities (The City of San Jose and The City of Milpitas). Of the partner agencies, Kids in Common has been designated the Assessment Study Project Manager. First 5 Santa Clara County has been and will continue to serve as the fiscal agent for the Partnership, including the funds earmarked for the Assessment Study. The estimated cost for the assessment is \$131,326.00. To date the Partnership has raised a portion of the funding necessary to contract with ASR and is actively engaged in dialogue with the community to raise the balance. Contributions thus far include a \$25,000.00 grant from the Bella Vista Foundation, a \$2000.00 contribution from the City of San Jose (Smart Start), pledges from the Partner members for \$30,000.00, and personal donations from individuals.

A letter and invoice from the Partnership are attached, requesting that the City of Milpitas (in its role as a Partnership member) contribute \$1000.00 to support the assessment. The City of San Jose and the City of Milpitas, in their roles as Partnership members, have received the first opportunities to contribute to the project. The Partnership workplan involves pursuing contributions from other potential funding sources, including the other cities in Santa Clara County, during the first quarter of 2004. In return for the contribution, the City of Milpitas will receive access to the data in the reports, an opportunity to compare the City of Milpitas’ schools with like API scored sample schools, and continued dialogue regarding best practices for preparing children for school.

The City of Milpitas has a venerable reputation for wide reaching support of children and families as demonstrated by a long history of innovative policies, procedures and priorities. In fact, the City of Milpitas’ reputation for strong family support likely prompted the initial invitation to participate in the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness. By contributing to the Santa Clara County School Readiness Assessment, the City of Milpitas will be demonstrating its commitment to the health and well being of all children in Milpitas and the County, and also serving as a role model for other cities in the County.

Recommendation

Approve contribution from the City Council Community Promotion Budget and fund the amount of \$1000.00 to the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness to support the Santa Clara County School Readiness Assessment Project.

Attachments

Definition of School Readiness

Santa Clara County School Readiness Assessment – Draft Work Plan (Kids in Common)

Letter Requesting Contribution to the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness

Invoice from the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness

Santa Clara Partnership for School Readiness
Definition of School Readiness

Children are ready for school when they have:

- Basic needs for health and physical development satisfied.
 - Adequate nutrition, regular health care and early identification of developmental delays
- Environments that are safe, nurturing and support learning
- Positive approaches to learning new skills
- Skills to communicate their thoughts, feelings and experiences
- The ability to explore and learn from their surroundings
- Effective interactions with peers and adults

Families are ready for school when they:

- Provide stability and support for their children
- Are responsive to their children and the school
- Protect their children from harm and threats
- Are affectionate and nurturing
- Provide opportunities to experience and resolve challenges cooperatively
- Support the development of skills and capabilities for the child
- Provide opportunities for positive interaction with adults and other children
- Ensure that children are respected

Schools are ready for children when they:

- Are open to families as the children transition between home and school
- Staff schools to provide continuity between early education experiences and elementary school
- Help children learn and make sense of their world based on cultural practices and beliefs
- Are committed to the success of every child and modify their approaches to accommodate the different needs and learning styles the children bring to school
- Provide an environment that supports teachers and provides for their professional development
- Take responsibility for results and alter practices and programs to benefit children taking into consideration the diversity that the children bring
- Understand, accept, and integrate the principles of child development within school practices

Communities are ready to support children when they:

- Provide social supports for families
- Promote the development of all children
- Ensure resources are available for children's positive development
- Are visibly inclusive
- Expect achievement from all children
- Promote children as community assets

Sources: The California Education Dialogue; National Education Goals Panel; From Neurons to Neighborhoods, Committee on Integrating The Science of Early Childhood Development, National Research Council, Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Science/Jack Shonkoff and Deborah Phillips, editors, National Academy Press 2000.

Santa Clara County School Readiness Assessment -- Draft Work Plan

Kids In Common

Project Phase	Milestones	Lead	Timeframe
Planning and Buy-In	1. Community forum - Consensus about need for school readiness assessment - Consensus about purpose and process of school readiness assessment - Identify willing members to participate in task force to oversee project	Kids In Common; Peninsula Partnership	Nov – Dec 2003
	2. Conduct planning meeting with county superintendent and district superintendents - Consensus about need for school readiness assessment - Consensus about purpose and process of school readiness assessment - Identify willing members to participate in task force to oversee project	Kids In Common; Peninsula Partnership	Nov – Dec 2003
Design	3. Review and modify (if necessary) Kindergarten Observation Form	Task Force	Dec - Feb 2004
	4. Build information infrastructure with schools to capture needed demographic data	Kids In Common; Task Force and Schools	Dec – Feb 2004
	5. Identify sample for assessment	ASR	Mar-Apr 2004
	6. Identify most effective strategy for communicating with schools about teachers selected as part of the sample	Kids In Common; Task Force	Mar - Apr 2004
Implementation	7. Communicate with schools and principals about teacher selection	Kids In Common	Jun – Aug 2004
	8. Conduct orientation sessions with teachers on observation form and its administration	Kids In Common, ASR	Aug – Sep 2004
	9. Complete observation forms	Teachers	Aug – Oct 2004
	10. Monitor completion and submission of observation forms	ASR	Aug – Oct 2004

Data Analysis and Reporting	11. Data coding, entry, tabulation and analysis of observation forms	ASR	Oct – Nov 2004
	12. Preparation of final report	ASR	Nov – Jan 2004
	13. Dissemination of results	Kids In Common	Ongoing



"Strengthening Communities to Grow Successful Children"

November 7, 2003

Toby Librande
Child Care Coordinator
City of Milpitas
457 East Calaveras Blvd
Milpitas, CA 95035

Dear Toby,

We are writing you on behalf of the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness. The Partnership's mission and vision are to be an advocate for family well being as integral to the health of the community. We strive to be the catalyst for the strategic use of resources to advance *school readiness for all children through age eight in Santa Clara County*.

One barrier to strategically improving the impact of our investments is the lack of specific and quantitative information about the skills that Santa Clara County children have when they arrive at school. To address this gap in information, the Partnership will be conducting a countywide assessment of children entering kindergarten to determine their readiness for school in Fall 2004. We are asking you to support our implementation of this assessment because we know that the City of Milpitas has a strong commitment to the success of children in Santa Clara County.

Study Background and Outcomes

Readiness for school is an essential indicator of child well-being and includes physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional well-being, the approach to learning, communication/language, and cognition/general knowledge. Schools need to be ready to educate young children, families need to be able to help prepare children for school, and the community needs to have the capacity to help ensure that children arrive at school ready to learn. The Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment will give us data that will allow us to better target programs that create a community in which children experience school success. The specific outcomes of the assessment are as follows:

- Understanding of the current state of readiness of our community's children and which pre-k interventions are having the desired impact
 - A report will be developed and made available to the community. We will also conduct at least one formal community information meeting.
 - All members of the Partnership and funders of the project will have access to the data reports.
- Creating a dialogue wherein best practices may be shared and resources may be more effectively allocated to improve readiness.
- The Partnership will be using the data to create a "call to action" to community leaders that outlines priorities for change.

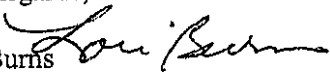
See the attached work plan for details on the deliverables.

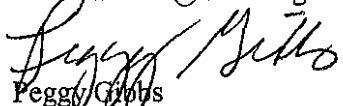
Project Coordination

The Partnership has retained the services of Kids in Common (KIC) as project manager and Applied Survey Research (ASR) as research partner for this assessment. KIC is committed to improving the lives of children in Silicon Valley and has a proven track record of coordinating community-wide change initiatives on behalf of children. ASR is a nonprofit social research firm dedicated to conducting and using community-based research to help people build better communities. ASR has been working with San Mateo County for the last 3 years to conduct similar assessment of school readiness and will bring their expertise to bear on this project.

The Partnership for School Readiness invites you to join us in supporting the development and publication of this very important tool in Santa Clara County. **We are asking Milpitas to consider a contribution of \$1,000 to support the assessment.** Your contribution is critical to ensuring the success of this initiative and to the health and well being of our children. We hope you will join and look forward to working with you to create a community in which all children experience success in school.

Best Regards,


Lori Burns
Co-chair, Partnership for School Readiness
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"Strengthening Communities to Grow Successful Children"

INVOICE

DATE: December 9, 2003

TO: The City of Milpitas

FROM: The Santa Clara Partnership for School Readiness

RE: Invoice for Participation in Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment Fall 2004

The City of Milpitas agrees to support the Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment in Santa Clara County, scheduled to be conducted in Fall 2004 school year. **The City** will support this assessment in the amount of one thousand dollar (**\$1000.00**).

Please remit payment to:

First 5 Santa Clara County
Attn: Ralph Oda
1150 S. Bascom Ave. Suite 12
San Jose, CA. 95128

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, a member of the Partnership, has agreed to act as its fiscal agent for The Partnership because its mission is consistent with the Partnership's vision and goals. FIRST 5 is a public agency that manages more than \$23 million annually in funds flowing to the county as a result of Proposition 10.

Make a note on the check that the payment is to be applied to the Partnership for School Readiness assessment account.